

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY  
TRANSPORTATION SECURITY ADMINISTRATION**

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**Before the**

**HOMELAND SECURITY COMMITTEE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC SECURITY, INFRASTRUCTURE  
PROTECTION, AND CYBERSECURITY  
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

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Good morning Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Sanchez, and Members of the Subcommittee. I am pleased to have this opportunity to testify on the important subject of security training for freight rail, mass transit, and passenger rail employees.

America has some form of rail transit (i.e., some combination of subway, light rail and/or commuter rail systems) in 30 cities in 22 states. These systems provide 11.3 million passenger trips each weekday. In fact, of the 3.5 billion rail trips taken annually, 77 percent are on heavy rail systems, more commonly known as subways. As you know, public transportation is inherently an open, accessible system intended to help people move rapidly and efficiently between home and work, shopping, medical care, and other community activities on a daily basis.

**Federal Rail Transit Security Initiatives Since 9/11**

Immediately following September 11, 2001, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) of the Department of Transportation (DOT) undertook an aggressive nationwide security program and led the initial Federal effort on transit security. The initial response included conducting threat and vulnerability assessments in 37 large transit systems, 30 of which carry almost 90 percent of all transit riders. The assessments gave us a comprehensive view of transit system readiness, vulnerabilities, and consequences and identified the three important areas that continue to form the fundamental baseline of transit security: employee training, public awareness and emergency preparedness. TSA continues to build upon these fundamentals.

In 2002, to help guide transit agency priorities, FTA issued a Top 20 Security Action Item List to improve transit safety and security operations, particularly with regard to employee training, public awareness, and emergency preparedness. In a joint effort coordinated with the Mass Transit Sector Coordinating Council, TSA and FTA revised the Security Action Items this year.

## **The Role of Transit Employees in Transit Security**

Transit employees are part of America's first line of defense and will be our first responders in the event of a terrorist attack or other emergency on a transit system. Their vigilant observations may detect indicators of a developing plan or attack. Their actions taken in the critical moments immediately after an attack or an emergency can significantly reduce the severity of injuries and the number of deaths that result. As a result, there is simply no substitute for security awareness and emergency response training for transit employees. We must rely on – and cultivate – human capabilities to prevent, detect, and respond to security threats.

The 400,000-plus transit employees throughout America are the “eyes and ears” of our most important security system. Transit employees travel the same routes, maintain the same facilities, and see the same people every day as they go about their duties. They are in the best position to identify unusual packages, suspicious substances, and people who are acting suspiciously. But they need to develop an understanding of what to look for and skills in how to respond. These skills can be acquired through extensive training, rigorous emergency planning, and regular emergency testing and drills.

## **Rail Transit Security Training Initiatives at TSA**

I want to affirm that training remains a core fundamental for TSA. We understand that training and preparedness are critical if transit agencies are to respond appropriately to a terrorist attack or a natural disaster. We recognize that TSA and the transit industry need to provide more training for more employees to realize our goal of thoroughly integrating security awareness training as part of the security paradigm.

In fiscal year 2006, TSA provided nearly \$1.5 million in direct financial support for the implementation and continuing development of programs to enhance transit security, most notably security training for transit employees. Of the allocation, \$1,196,000 enables expansion of multiple Federal training programs that have come to be recognized for their quality and are widely used by transit systems. This funding will enable an additional 22 courses on Counter-Terrorism Strategies and the FTA developed Terrorist Activity Recognition and Reaction to be held over the next year. We continue to focus on training that outlines for transit employees actions that can be taken in the minutes preceding and immediately after an event that are crucial to mitigating the potential impact. Timely decisions by an operator or controller to determine whether to evacuate a train station or take it to the next station in the midst of a chemical event for example, are vital choices that dramatically affect the impact of an attack. TSA is funding an incident management course for operations control center personnel that will equip them with the skills to take operational actions to respond to a chemical, biological, or explosive incident. TSA's Surface Transportation Security Inspectors help facilitate the availability of course offerings to transit system security officials.

TSA has a key role in awarding the \$143 million for the 2006 Transit Security Grant (TSGP) and Intercity Rail Security Grant Programs. Working in concert with our partners, TSA has worked to streamline the TSGP process, ensure that the resources are focused on key risk reduction priorities. One of the security priorities emphasized in the 2006 TSGP is the expansion of employee training programs that emphasize basic security awareness for front line employees, equipment familiarization, incident severity assessing and reporting, crew communication and coordination, operational response and evacuation procedures. As we move into the next cycle of grant allocations, TSA wants to ensure that transit agencies have implemented all the fundamentals before investments are made in other projects that do not have the return on investment that fundamental training programs provide. To date, we have awarded almost \$400 million over the last three years with training as one of the key focus areas.

Congress authorized and funded TSA to hire 100 Surface Transportation Security Inspectors (STSIs), which we completed in October 2005. Our inspectors are in the field every day across the country, working to raise the baseline of security throughout the industry. To date, our inspectors have surveyed and assessed over 750 properties. They have an assessment tool that measures an agency's level of training for frontline staff and other personnel in addition to monitoring other key security action items. Further, TSA's STSIs are also empowered to provide federal assistance through existing programs to help local agencies improve their security standards. Some of the assistance that is offered includes Visible Intermodal Protection Response teams, explosive detection canine assistance, joint public awareness campaigns, and exercise and drill expertise.

Through our work with the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) TSA has trained over 480 law enforcement officers, transit police, transit system security directors and security coordinators, and other first responders through the Land Transportation Anti-Terrorism Training Program. This program provides training to local authorities in protecting land transportation infrastructure including rail, light rail, mass transit, and bus operations. Areas of focus include security planning, transit system vulnerabilities, contingency planning, recognition and response for threats involving explosives and weapons of mass destruction, and crisis and consequence management. In Fiscal Year 2006 alone, 240 persons have completed the program.

TSA will continue to monitor the level of industry compliance with the baseline security action items. The results of these assessments will determine if additional regulatory steps are needed to ensure that a strong security baseline including a well trained workforce is in place.

TSA remains mindful that it must have a layered approach to security. We understand that information sharing, both classified and unclassified, is a critical component to working with industry to prevent and respond to attacks. We have made significant improvements in our ability to communicate with transit agencies. TSA communicates with the top 100 transit agencies regularly. We are working aggressively to expand access to secure phones so that we can provide them access to sensitive threat information in real time. Another layer is the use of canine teams in transit systems.

Currently, we have 33 canine teams deployed in 11 systems and we expect additional agencies will be added to our canine program this year. We also appreciate your support in providing funding requested in FY 2007 to support Transit Watch, a program that encourages public awareness and preparedness. We will continue to add measures and support programs to enhance a layered security approach prioritize training among the many measures systems can take.

### **Freight Rail Security Training Initiatives**

TSA is acutely aware of the importance of security training in the freight rail arena. This year, in conjunction with DOT, we issued a list of recommended security action items to rail carriers for the transport of toxic inhalation hazard (TIH) materials. Included in these security action items are recommendations that directly relate to continued education and training. We are currently developing a CD-ROM based interactive training program on the recognition of improvised explosive devices on railcars and on railroad property. This training will be made available to rail carriers at no cost in the next couple of months.

TSA, other DHS components, and the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), in cooperation with affected railroads, conduct high threat urban area (HTUA) assessments in order to identify the vulnerabilities of selected urban areas where TIH shipments are moved in significant quantity. TSA has developed a risk assessment tool in coordination with railroad owners and operators and federal agencies participating in the HTUAs. TSA has provided a comprehensive training program for railroad security directors to effectively use this tool. TSA has also developed a Rail Corridor Risk Management Tool for use by freight owners and operators nationwide where on-the-ground assessments are not conducted.

### **Conclusion**

In closing, the nation's rail and transit operators and their employees have responded admirably to the new threat environment. Thanks to their efforts, passenger and freight rail is more secure and better prepared to respond to emergencies than ever before. However, we must continue to focus on this important issue, including ensuring that training is disseminated throughout transit organizations, that employees are receiving refresher training, and that we are developing training to address the emerging needs of the transit environment.

I appreciate the opportunity to provide this important update on rail security. We value the critical role the Congress, and especially this Subcommittee, plays in the effort to protect rail security. We look forward to working with you on the full range of subjects so critical to protecting America's transportation infrastructure, its passengers, and the commerce that it carries.

Thank you. I would be pleased to respond to questions.